

Sunday Evening, October 8, 2023  
Matthew 5:33–37; 23:16–22; Lev. 5:4–6; Eccl. 5:4–7

*WCF Chapter XXII - Of Lawful Oaths and Vows*

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, in which—on an appropriate occasion—the person taking the oath solemnly calls upon God to witness what he asserts or promises and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears.
2. The name of God is the only name by which men should swear, and they should do so with all holy fear and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and fearful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred. Yet since, in matters of weight and great importance, an oath is warranted by the Word of God under the new testament as well as under the old, therefore, a lawful oath ought to be taken when imposed in such matters by lawful authority.
3. Whoever takes an oath ought to consider seriously the great importance of such a solemn act, and in doing so should affirm nothing but what he himself is fully convinced is the truth. A person may bind himself by oath only to what is good and just, what he believes to be such, and what he is able and resolved to perform.
4. The oath is to be taken in the plain and usual sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige a person to sin, but when it is taken in matters which are not sinful, it obligates performance of the oath even though it may hurt. The oath is not to be violated even though it is made to heretics or unbelievers.
5. A vow is similar in nature to a promissory oath and ought to be made with the same religious care and be performed with the same faithfulness.

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- I. Our God Requires We Keep Each Word - *Because Who He Is Demands Truth*
  - A. He Is the Faithful, True God
    1. God the Father Is Truth Deut. 7:9; Ps. 89:28; Jn. 17:3; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 15:3
    2. God the Son Is Truth Jn 1:14, 17; 14:6; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 3:7; 3:14
    3. God the Holy Spirit Is Truth Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:13; 1 Jn. 4:6
  - B. The Lord Abhors Falsehood as Contrary to His Very Nature  
Prov. 6:16–19; Prov. 12:22; Deut. 19:16–20
- II. Our God Requires We Keep Each Word Always - *Because When He Demands Truth*
  - A. Christ Is Not Condemning Taking of Oaths and Vows Matt. 5:33–37; and 23:16–22  
Heb. 6:18; Gen. 22:16; Ps. 110:4; Rom. 9:1–3; Jer. 4:2; 12:16; Deut. 10:20; 6:13; Ps. 76:11
  - B. Christ Is Condemning Loop-holes in Keeping Our Word
  - C. Christ Is Requiring All Speech *Is the Same* as an Oath and Vow  
Matt. 5:33–37; Jas. 5:12

III. Our God Requires We Keep Each Word Seriously - *Because How He Enforces Truth*

- A. God Is Witness to Every Word Eccl. 5:4–7
  
- B. God Is Judge for Every Word 2 Chron. 6:22, 23  
Prov. 19:5; Prov. 21:28; Rev. 22:15; Rev. 21:27; 1 Ki. 21:7
  
- C. God Is Redeemer to Pay for Every Broken Word Lev. 5:4–6

*Quotes*

"Where an oath is falsely taken, it is a heaven-daring attempt to enlist the Almighty in the sanction of the creature's lie and is thus, either the most outrageous levity, or the most outrageous impiety of which he can be guilty." R. L. Dabney

"Christians are required to be models of truth. Our word should be sacred, and we need to cultivate a scrupulous concern for our word. Here is where the depth of true spirituality shows itself. A spiritual person is one whose word you can trust. This Christian has integrity and keeps promises. In so doing, the person bears witness to the truthfulness of the God being worshiped and served." R. C. Sproul

"When men make a promise to each other, there's nothing more common than from some slight loss which the performance of it would occasion, to endeavor to find a pretext for breaking their engagements. . . Hence it is that we generally see so much unfaithfulness among men, that they do not consider themselves bound to perform the promises which they have made, except in so far as it will promote their own personal interest." John Calvin

"Where there is no regard for truth, when men can subscribe to oaths and vows with no intention of abiding by their terms, then the sanctity of oaths and vows disappears, and men shift the foundations of society from the truth to a lie." Rushdony

Excerpt from President George Washington's farewell address:

". . . Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for prosperity, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."